

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

IMAGE PROCESSING APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention:

5 The present invention relates to an image processing apparatus and method and, more particularly, to an image processing apparatus and method of adjusting the hue of an input image signal.

10 The present invention also relates to an image reproducing method and apparatus and, more particularly, to an image reproducing method and apparatus for converting an image sensing signal obtained from an , image sensing device, such as an image sensing tube or a CCD, into a visualizable image signal, e.g., an NTSC-RGB
15 signal.

Description of the Related Art:

20 In a television camera using an image sensing device such as a CCD, some image reproduction parameters are generally determined from image sensing data during image reproduction processing, in order to constantly obtain images which apparently give the same impression or to obtain as faithful reproduced images as possible regardless of deterioration with time of the image

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sensing device or a color filter and changes in an illuminating light source. The image sensing data is two-dimensional digital image data formed from an image signal obtained by photographing an object by using an
5 image sensing device.

Examples of the image reproduction parameters are a color temperature and a reproduction luminance level. The image production parameters are used to correct the color temperature or set the reproduction luminance
10 level.

More specifically, the correction of the color temperature is to adjust a so-called white balance so that an object which is supposed to look white looks white. Generally, this color temperature correction is
15 performed on the basis of image sensing data. That is, data of an object which is supposed to look white is extracted from image sensing data, and a white balance coefficient as one image reproduction parameter is determined on the basis of the extracted data. In the
20 white balance adjustment, a plurality of color component signals constituting an output image signal from an image sensing device are amplified in accordance with the white balance coefficient. Consequently, the signal

of the data is corrected by a gamma correcting unit 4.

In the configuration shown in Fig.1 as above, the WB adjusting unit 12 is arranged subsequently to the complementary color-pure color converting unit 11, and the color temperature correction is done by performing the white balance adjustment for the pure color data (R,G,B) after complementary colors are converted into pure colors. This configuration is advantageous in that the color temperature correction can be relatively easily performed because the gain of the pure color data (R,G,B) can be directly adjusted.

In the configuration shown in Fig. 2, on the other hand, a WB adjusting unit 2 adjusts the white balance of complementary color data (Ma,Gr,Ye,Cy) obtained by an image sensing unit 1. Thereafter, a complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 performs complementary color-pure color conversion to obtain pure color data (R,G,B). This configuration has the advantage that a luminance signal with a higher resolution than that obtained in the configuration shown in Fig. 1 can be easily obtained.

The method of adjusting the hue of an image by adjusting the white balance is effective when many

sensing areas, an unnatural synthetic image in which the correlation between luminances is lost results.

The hue of an image is adjusted by adjusting the white balance as follows. An object which is supposed to look white under a certain photographing light source is photographed. The amplification factor of each of a plurality of color component signals constituting an image signal obtained from the image sensing device is so adjusted that the white object accurately looks white when the image signal is reproduced. That is, it can be considered that the white balance adjustment is performed to compensate for changes in the light source during photography.

Commonly, the white balance adjustment described above is a principal means for compensating for changes in the light source during photography. A white balance coefficient used in this white balance adjustment is obtained on the basis of information of the light source during photography.

Of a plurality of different image reproduction parameters used in image reproduction, some parameters are preferably obtained on the basis of information of the light source during photography, like the image

reproduction parameter (white balance coefficient) used
in the white balance adjustment. An example is a
complementary color-pure color conversion matrix used to
convert an image signal obtained by using a
5 complementary color filter into a pure color signal.

The complementary color-pure color conversion
matrix is determined by the spectral transmittance
characteristic of a complementary color filter. Usually,
the spectral transmittance characteristic of a
10 complementary color filter is not ideal. The influence
of this difference from the ideal characteristic changes
in accordance with the characteristics of the light
source during photography. That is, a complementary
color-pure color conversion matrix optimally selected
15 under a certain photographing light source gives an
optimum complementary color-pure color conversion result
under this light source. However, this matrix does not
give suitable conversion results to all light sources.

When a photographing light source changes,
20 therefore, it is desirable to change the complementary
color-pure color conversion matrix in accordance with
the light source. Also, the above two image reproduction
parameters, i.e., the white balance coefficient and the

complementary color-pure color conversion matrix, are related to each other under a certain photographing light source. Accordingly, it is undesirable to individually determine these parameters.

5 Generally, however, the complementary color-pure
color conversion is performed by using a semi-fixed
complementary color-pure color conversion matrix which
is optimally set under a certain photographing light
source. If the photographing light source changes,
10 therefore, the influence of the difference of the
spectral transmittance characteristic of a complementary
color filter from the ideal characteristic increases.
Also, a contradiction sometimes occurs between the white
balance coefficient and the complementary color-pure
15 color conversion matrix having the correlation.
Consequently, no complementary color-pure color
conversion can be properly performed, and this makes
faithful reproduction of an image difficult.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The present invention has been made to individually
or collectively solve the above conventional problems,
and has as its object to provide an image processing
apparatus and method capable of accurately setting, from

a group of image sensing data, an image reproduction parameter for obtaining an optimum reproduced image.

To achieve the above object, one preferred embodiment of the present invention discloses an image processing apparatus for converting image sensing data
 5 obtained by image sensing means into a visualizable image signal by using an image reproduction parameter, comprising storage means for storing the image sensing data; designating means for designating a condition of
 10 selection of the image sensing data; selecting means for selecting image sensing data meeting the selection condition designated by the designating means from the image sensing data stored in the storage means; the holding means for holding the image sensing data
 15 selected by the selecting means; setting means for setting the image reproduction parameter on the basis of the image sensing data held by the holding means; and converting means for converting the image sensing data held by the holding means into the image signal by using
 20 the image reproduction parameter set by the setting means.

The present invention has been made to individually or collectively solve the above conventional problems,

and has as its object to provide an image processing apparatus and method capable of converting an image sensing signal into an image signal by using a group of more accurate image reproduction parameters meeting the
5 condition of a photographing light source.

To achieve the above object, one preferred embodiment of the present invention discloses an image processing apparatus for converting image sensing data obtained by image sensing means into a visualizable
10 image signal by using a plurality of different image reproduction parameters, comprising setting means for setting at least one of the different image reproduction parameters; and converting means for converting the image sensing data into the image signal by using the
15 image reproduction parameter set by the setting means, wherein the setting means sets at least one parameter on the basis of another one of the different image reproduction parameters.

The present intention has been made to individually
20 or collectively solve the above conventional problems, and has as its object to provide an image processing apparatus and method capable of adjusting a color balance even when no object which is supposed to look

white exists or only a few such objects exist.

To achieve the above object, one preferred embodiment of the present invention discloses an image processing apparatus comprising first input means for
5 inputting an image signal; second input means for inputting position information indicating an arbitrary position of an image and image data in the position; extracting means for extracting the image data in the position corresponding to the position information from
10 the image signal input from the first input means; setting means for setting an image processing parameter on the basis of the image data extracted by the extracting means and the input image data from the second input means; and processing means for processing
15 the input image signal from the first input means by using the image processing parameter set by the setting means.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following
20 description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate the same or similar parts throughout the figures thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1 and 2 are block diagrams showing configurations for performing color temperature correction;

5 Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing the configuration of an image reproducing apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention;

10 Fig. 4 is a flow chart showing the procedure of image processing done by the image processing apparatus of the first embodiment;

 Fig. 5 is a view for explaining an example of a synthetic image;

 Fig. 6 is a view for explaining composition information of an object;

15 Fig. 7 is a view for explaining image sensing data having a time continuity;

 Fig. 8 is a flow chart showing image sensing data grouping processing;

 Fig. 9 shows an example of a chromaticity diagram;

20 Fig. 10 is a view showing the range of a correlated color temperature of image sensing data represented by (R/G,B/G) signal values;

 Fig. 11 is a flow chart showing image sensing data

grouping processing when a composition is designated as the condition of grouping;

Fig. 12 is a flow chart showing processing of grouping image sensing data by using information
5 appended to the image sensing data;

Fig. 13 is a schematic block diagram showing the overall configuration of a color image reproducing apparatus according to the second embodiment;

Fig. 14 is a schematic block diagram showing the
10 overall configuration of a color image reproducing apparatus according to the third embodiment;

Fig. 15 is a schematic block diagram showing the overall configuration of a color image reproducing apparatus according to the fourth embodiment;

15 Fig. 16 is a block diagram showing the configuration of an image processing apparatus according to the fifth embodiment; and

Fig. 17 is a flow chart showing the operation of a color image reproduction processor shown in Fig. 16.

20 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Embodiments of the present invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

<First Embodiment>

[Structure]

Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing an embodiment of an image reproducing apparatus according to the present invention.

A color image sensing unit 10 such as a digital camera senses the image of an object and outputs the image sensing data of the object to an image sensing data memory 20. The image sensing data memory 20 stores the image sensing data supplied from the color image sensing unit 10.

A color image reproduction processor 30 performs predetermined image reproduction processing for the image sensing data stored in the image sensing data memory 20. For example, the color image reproduction processor 30 converts the image sensing data into digital NTSC-RGB data and outputs the digital data to a color image reproducing display 40 and a reproduced image data memory 50.

The color image reproducing display 40 includes a color video card and a monitor. The color image reproducing display 40 receives an output color image signal from the color image reproduction processor 30 or

reads out a color image signal from the reproduced image data memory 50 and displays the signal as a color image on the monitor.

The reproduced image data memory 50 stores the
5 image data reproduced by the color image reproduction
processor 30. The image data stored in the reproduced
image data memory 50 is supplied to and displayed by the
color image reproducing display 40 as needed.

More specifically, the color image reproduction processor 30 comprises an image sensing data holding unit 31, an image sensing data selecting unit 33, an image sensing data selection designating unit 34, an image reproduction parameter determining unit 32, an image reproduction processing unit 35, and a control unit 36. The image sensing data holding unit 31 holds the digital image sensing data from the image sensing data memory 20. The image sensing data selecting unit 33 selects image sensing data from the image sensing data memory 20 and outputs the selected data to the image sensing data holding unit 31. The image sensing data selection designating unit 34 designates the condition by which the image sensing data selecting unit 33 selects image sensing data. The image reproduction

gradation conversion lookup table, a knee point, a dynamic range, a color gamut, light source information, a color coordinate conversion matrix coefficient, a spatial frequency characteristic, a black balance coefficient, an S/N ratio, an auto-correlation coefficient, a Wiener spectrum, an intensity (density) distribution, and a luminance distribution, and parameters obtained directly or indirectly from these pieces of information.

10 The image sensing data selection designating unit
34 can designate the condition of selection in order
that of a plurality of image sensing data stored in the
image sensing data memory 20, image sensing data meeting
a predetermined condition be processed as a group of
15 image sensing data. The designated condition is given as
a condition related to color temperature information or
the composition of an object obtained from image sensing
data, or as a predetermined condition pertaining to the
photographing time, the photographing mode, the
20 photographing place, the EV value, the aperture value,
the object distance, the shutter speed, the use/nonuse
of an electronic flash, or the use/nonuse of an optical
low-pass filter, each of which is information appended

to image sensing data.

[Image Reproduction Processing]

Fig. 4 is a flow chart showing the procedure of image processing done by the image reproducing apparatus of this embodiment. Fig. 4 shows processing executed by the color image reproduction processor 30. Assume that a plurality of image sensing data obtained by the color image sensing unit 10 are already stored in the image sensing data memory 20.

When the processing shown in Fig. 4 starts, the control unit 36 for controlling the processing checks the contents of image sensing data selection designated (in step S1) by the image sensing data selection designating unit 34 and sends the contents of the designated selection to the image sensing data selecting unit 33. On the basis of the contents of the selection designated by the image sensing data selection designating unit 34, the image sensing data selecting unit 33 selects image sensing data meeting the contents of the designated selection from the image sensing data stored in the image sensing data memory 20 and outputs the selected data to the image sensing data holding unit 31 (step S2). If the image sensing data meeting the

contents of the designated selection is data of less than one image plane, this processing is not executed. If the selected image sensing data is data of one image plane, the image sensing data is converted into image data by ordinary image reproduction processing. If there is no image sensing data to be selected, information indicating this is output, and the processing is terminated.

The image sensing data holding unit 31 holds the group of image sensing data selectively output from the image sensing data memory 20 (step S3).

The image reproduction parameter determining unit 32 analyzes the image sensing data group held by the image sensing data holding unit 31; obtains, e.g., light source information (e.g., the color temperature or the chromaticity of the light source) when the image sensing data are obtained, which is necessary in white balance adjustment, and determines an image reproduction parameter on the basis of the light source information (step S4). That is, by using the plurality of image sensing data selectively output as a group of image sensing data from the image sensing data memory 20 and held in the image sensing data holding unit 31, the

image reproduction parameter determining unit 32
determines an image reproduction parameter and sends the
parameter to the image reproduction processing unit 35.

By using the image reproduction parameter thus
5 determined, the image reproduction processing unit 35
performs image reproduction processing by which the
image sensing data group held by the image sensing data
holding unit 31 is converted into a group of image data
(step S5).

10 [Selection Conditions of Image Sensing Data]

The conditions under which image sensing data are
selected from a plurality of image sensing data so as to
be processed as one group of image sensing data will be
described below.

15 Information obtained from the analysis of image
sensing data itself includes color temperature
information and the composition of an object. It is
sometimes necessary to process a plurality of image
sensing data whose color temperatures are within a
20 certain fixed range as a group of correlated image
sensing data. Especially when the number of samples used
to estimate color temperatures is small, the estimation
accuracy can be increased by again estimating the color

given as information appended to image sensing data, a group of image sensing data can be generated by analyzing these pieces of information.

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5 If the photographing times of image sensing data are within a certain fixed range, it is obviously effective to process these data as a group of image sensing data. It is also clearly effective to process a series of image sensing data whose imaging mode is a continuous shooting mode as a group of image sensing data. When an electronic flash is used, information of the photographing light source largely depends upon the characteristics of the flash light. Therefore, it is useful to simultaneously process a plurality of image sensing data, obtained by using an electronic flash, as

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15 a group of image sensing data.

Pieces of information such as the EV value, the shutter speed, the aperture value, and the object distance extremely largely depend upon the photographing conditions and function as strong restricting conditions when a reproduction parameter is determined. Therefore, image sensing data having these values within a predetermined range are processed as one image sensing data group. This is very efficient when image

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reproduction is performed.

In information of the photographing place, the characteristics of an object remain unchanged. Therefore, this information is very effective in accurately reproducing an object. Additionally, when this information is used in combination with information of, e.g., the photographing time (date), information on a change in the photographing conditions can also be obtained. This obviously increases the usefulness of the information of the photographing place.

In the above example, the condition for each individual information is primarily described. However, it is evident that the effectiveness is sometimes greatly improved by combining the above conditions.

As shown in Fig. 5, for example, as the condition of image reproduction processing, a plurality of image sensing data having a spatial continuity are sometimes designated to obtain a synthetic image. If this is the case, it is necessary to hold the spatial continuity in the synthetic image. For this purpose, it is very effective to perform image reproduction processing by processing a plurality of image sensing data as one group of image sensing data.

both a time continuity and a continuity in the photographing order, i.e., image sensing data obtained when the photographing mode is a continuous shooting mode, or image sensing data also having a spatial

5 continuity, are processed as one group of image sensing data. Consequently, an extraneous condition occurring in each individual image sensing data can be eliminated, and this allows reproduction of an image keeping the continuity.

10 [Grouping of Image Sensing Data]

Grouping Using Color Temperature Information

A method of grouping image sensing data, i.e., a method of obtaining a group of image sensing data, by using color temperature information obtained from the
15 analysis of image sensing data will be described in detail below. Fig. 8 is a flow chart showing the image sensing data grouping processing. The processing is executed by the control unit 36 by controlling the image sensing data selection designating unit 34 and the image
20 sensing data selecting unit 33.

The conditions given by the image sensing data selection designating unit 34 are a correlated color temperature (A(K)) and its selecting range color

temperature ($\pm dA(K)$). The correlated color temperature range is sometimes directly input by the user as a numerical value. It is also possible to input information related to the correlated color temperature, e.g., words such as "daytime", "evening", "sunset glow", "cloud", and "incandescent lamp", which the use can imagine in relation to the color temperature. That is, color temperature ranges corresponding to these words can be previously defined and stored in the ROM 36a, and a color temperature range corresponding to the information input by the user can be read out and used. Alternatively, the color temperature ranges corresponding to these words can be obtained by calculations (step S11 in Fig. 8). It is also possible to use adjectives such as "red" and "pale" from which the color temperatures can be imagined or practical values of a chromaticity or a color difference.

When the above conditions are designated, the image sensing data selection designating unit 34 designates the correlated color temperature as the intrinsic information of image sensing data by using, e.g., a chromaticity diagram shown in Fig. 9.

Fig. 9 is a graph shown as Appended Figure 1 in JIS

Z 8725 "Methods for Determining Distribution Temperature and Color Temperature or Correlated Color Temperature of Light Sources". In Fig. 9, a reciprocal correlated color temperature T_{CP}^{-1} has the following relationship with a
5 correlated color temperature T_{CP} :

$$T_{CP} (K) = \frac{10^6}{T_{CP}^{-1} (MK^{-1})} \dots (1)$$

The designated correlated color temperature is supplied to the image sensing data selecting unit 33 and
10 used as the condition of grouping.

The image sensing data selecting unit 33 sequentially loads the image sensing data stored in the image data memory 20 (step S12), analyzes the image sensing data and extracts information pertaining to the
15 color temperature (step S13), and checks whether the color temperature information satisfies the previously designated grouping condition (in this case the correlated color temperature) (step S14). If the color temperature information satisfies the condition, the
20 image sensing data selecting unit 33 supplies the corresponding image sensing data to the image sensing data holding unit 31 (step S15).

Generally, the color temperature information

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obtained by analyzing the image sensing data is not a correlated color temperature itself but another signal having a one-to-one correspondence with the correlated color temperature. For example, when an image sensing
5 device from which an R,G,B signal is obtained is used, it is possible to use, as the signal pertaining to the color temperature information, an (R/G,B/G) signal obtained by averaging image sensing data of one image plane or an (R/G,B/G) signal obtained as an average
10 value of regions (which meet the condition that, e.g., their chromaticity values are within the range which defines the correlated color temperature in Fig. 9) sampled from image sensing data and corresponding to white. Since the (R/G,B/G) signal depends upon the
15 sensitivity characteristic of the image sensing device used with respect to each color component, it is necessary to obtain the correspondence to the correlated color temperature by taking into account the characteristics of an image sensing device used as a
20 system.

Since the characteristics of the (R/G,B/G) signals and the correlated color temperatures whose correspondence is thus obtained are in a one-to-one

correspondence with each other, the relationship between the correlated color temperature $A(K)$ and its selecting range color temperature $(\pm dA(K))$ which are the grouping conditions previously given can also be defined as follows by using the $(R/G, B/G)$ signal. That is, the range of the correlated color temperatures of image sensing data to be grouped can be defined as $A \pm dA(K)$, or, as illustrated in Fig. 10, $((R/G)_0 \pm d(R/G)_0, (B/G)_0 \pm d(B/G)_0)$. Accordingly, to directly check by using the $(R/G, B/G)$ signal whether the grouping conditions are met, it is only necessary to check whether the color temperature information $(R/G, B/G)$ obtained by analyzing the image sensing data is within the range of $((R/G)_0 \pm d(R/G)_0, (B/G)_0 \pm d(B/G)_0)$.

15 To make this determination by using the correlated
color temperature, a correlated color temperature
corresponding to the (R/G/,B/G) signal directly obtained
from the image sensing data is obtained, and whether
this correlated color temperature is within the range of
20 $\Delta dA(K)$ as the grouping condition is checked.

When a condition related to the color temperature information is given as the grouping condition, the above processing is sequentially executed for the image

sensing data stored in the image data memory 20. It is determined that image sensing data meeting the grouping condition are image sensing data constituting the group. The image sensing data thus found to constitute the
5 group are supplied to the image sensing data holding unit 31 (step S15) and held in it. The image sensing data selecting unit 33 repeats the processes from step S12 to step S15 until it is determined in step S16 that all of the image sensing data stored in the image data
10 memory 20 are read out.

Grouping Using Composition of Object

A method of grouping image sensing data when the composition of an object is designated as the condition of grouping will be described below. Fig. 11 is a flow
15 chart showing the image sensing data grouping processing when the composition is designated as the grouping condition. This processing is executed by the control unit 36.

If the composition is designated as the grouping
20 condition in step S21, the image sensing data selecting unit 33 loads the image sensing data stored in the image data memory 20 (step S22). The image reproduction processing unit 35 performs simplified reproduction to

the extent to which the composition is known (step S23), thereby obtaining simple reproduced image data. The simplified reproduction can be reproduction processing to the extent to which the composition can be known. For example, pixels are thinned from image sensing data and luminance data is reproduced while the data amount is thus decreased.

Subsequently, the determination of grouping is performed by using the simple reproduced image data. However, it is generally efficient to subjectively determine, e.g., the similarity between images. Therefore, this subjective determination method is used in this embodiment. That is, if an instruction from the user can be expected in the determination of grouping, a series of simple reproduced image data are displayed on a monitor (steps S24 and S25), and the user selects images to be grouped from the image sensing data selection designating unit 34 (step S26). Image sensing data corresponding to the images selected by the user are sequentially supplied to the image sensing data holding unit 31 (step S30) and held in it.

To automatically determine grouping, edge image data is formed by extracting an edge component from

to the data (step S33), and sequentially loads image sensing data to which the information is appended (step S32). The image sensing data selecting unit 33 then checks whether the appended information meets the designated condition of selection for grouping (step S34).

If information such as the photographing time, the EV value, the aperture value, the object distance, or the shutter speed whose range can be numerically set is used, the grouping selection condition is whether the value of the appended information falls within the numerically indicated range. If information such as the image sensing mode, the photographing place, the use/nonuse of an electronic flash, or the use/nonuse of an optical low-pass filter which is difficult to numerically indicate is used, the agreement between the names of the places, the names of the modes, or the states of the use/nonuse is the condition. If grouping information (the same mark is given to image sensing data obtained in the same place) depending on the image sensing mode is given as appended information, the agreement between the given marks is the condition. Image sensing data meeting the grouping selection

condition are sequentially supplied to the image sensing data holding unit 31 (step S35) and held in it. The image sensing data selecting unit 33 repeats the processes from step S32 to S35 until it is determined in
5 step S36 that all of the image sensing data stored in the image data memory 20 are loaded.

Grouping in Image Synthesis

A method of grouping image sensing data when a synthetic image is to be obtained by increasing the
10 dynamic range as disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 7-131796 or a synthetic image is to be obtained by a method of panorama image synthesis for obtaining a wide-angle image from a plurality of image sensing data as disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 5-183789
15 will be described below.

In a case like this, it is desirable that appended information indicating that data is image sensing data for obtaining a certain synthetic image be given to the data during photography. If this is the case, in this
20 embodiment image sensing data constituting an image sensing data group are selected and grouped on the basis of the appended information. Alternatively, as explained in "Grouping Using Composition of Object", it is also

possible to simply reproduce image sensing data, perform grouping determination, and group the image sensing data. In processing for obtaining a synthetic image, all image sensing data stored in the image data memory 20 are in
5 some cases previously selected as image sensing data to be processed as a group when the processing is executed. If this is the case, in this embodiment, the image reproduction is performed by processing all of the image sensing data stored in the image data memory 20 as a
10 group of image sensing data.

In this embodiment as described above, when image sensing data is converted into image data, a plurality of image sensing data meeting predetermined conditions are processed as a group of image sensing data, and an image reproduction parameter is obtained from this image sensing data group. The image sensing data belonging to the image sensing data group can be converted into image data by using this image reproduction parameter.

In this embodiment, therefore, when an image reproduction parameter such as a white balance coefficient is determined from image sensing data in order to obtain an optimum reproduced image, this image reproduction parameter can be accurately set. Also,

complementary color filters of these colors, as the
image sensing data of the object.

By using the two-dimensional digital data output
from the image sensing unit 1, the WB adjusting unit 2
5 extracts photographing light source information (e.g.,
color temperature information or color component signals
(Ma,Gr,Ye,Cy) corresponding to the photographing light
source) and, on the basis of the photographing light
source information, obtains so-called white balance
10 coefficients. The white balance is adjusted by adjusting
the gains of these color component signals (Ma,Gr,Ye,Cy)
by using the white balance coefficients.

Assuming that the white balance coefficients are
($K_{Ma}, K_{Gr}, K_{Ye}, K_{Cy}$), complementary color data
15 (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') after the white balance adjustment are
represented by

$$\left. \begin{aligned} Ma' &= K_{Ma} \cdot Ma \\ Gr' &= K_{Gr} \cdot Gr \\ Ye' &= K_{Ye} \cdot Ye \\ Cy' &= K_{Cy} \cdot Cy \end{aligned} \right\} \dots (2)$$

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The complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 performs color space conversion for the complementary color data (Ma',Gr',Ye',Cy') whose white balance is adjusted by the WB adjusting unit 2, thereby obtaining pure color data (R,G,B) as a reproduction image signal. As an example, this complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 converts the complementary color data (Ma',Gr',Ye',Cy') after the white balance adjustment into NTSC-RGB data.

10 Generally, the conversion from the complementary color data (Ma',Gr',Ye',Cy') into the pure color data (R,G,B) is performed on the basis of functions f_R , f_G , and f_B (to be collectively referred to as a function f hereinafter unless it is necessary to distinguish between them). That is,

$$\left. \begin{aligned} R &= f_R (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') \\ G &= f_G (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') \\ B &= f_B (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') \end{aligned} \right\} \dots (3)$$

This function f is described by using a matrix or a lookup table (LUT).

In order to optimally display and record images, the gamma correcting unit 4 corrects the pure color data (R,G,B), which constitute the reproduction image signal

obtained by the complementary color-pure color
converting unit 3, by using the characteristics of an
image displaying recording apparatus (not shown), and
outputs the corrected component signals (R',G',B') as a
5 display recording signal.

By using the photographing light source information or the white balance coefficients as more practical parameters obtained by the WB adjusting unit 2, the conversion function determining unit 5 obtains the complementary color-pure color conversion function (to be referred to as a "conversion function" hereinafter) f to be used in the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3. The conversion function f obtained by the conversion function determining unit 5 is supplied to the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3. On the basis of the supplied conversion function f , the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 converts the complementary color data (Ma' , Gr' , Ye' , Cy') into the pure color data (R, G, B).

20. The color image reproducing apparatus with the above configuration primarily has its characteristic features in the configurations and processes of the WB adjusting unit 2, the complementary color-pure color

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converting unit 3, and the conversion function
determining unit 5. That is, the color image reproducing
apparatus of this embodiment comprises the conversion
function determining unit 5 for obtaining the conversion
5 function f used by the complementary color-pure color
converting unit 3 to convert the complementary color
data (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') into the pure color data (R, G, B).
The color image reproducing apparatus of this embodiment
is characterized in that this conversion function
10 determining unit 5 receives the photographing light
source information or the white balance coefficients
obtained by the WB adjusting unit 2 and obtains the
conversion function f on the basis of the received
information.

15 This characteristic feature will be described in
detail below. Assume that a conversion function
(daylight conversion functions $f_{R,D65}$, $f_{G,D65}$, and $f_{B,D65}$; to
be collectively referred to as f_{D65} hereinafter) which is
optimally set on the basis of daylight (e.g., a D65
20 light source described by JIS) is previously stored as a
reference conversion function in the reference function
storage 5a of the conversion function determining unit 5.

The WB adjusting unit 2 extracts photographing

light source information from image sensing data and obtains white balance coefficients for adjusting the gains of color component signals (M_a, G_r, Y_e, C_y) on the basis of the light source information. The WB adjusting unit 2 performs white balance adjustment by balancing the color component signals (M_a, G_r, Y_e, C_y) by using the white balance coefficients. Consequently, a change in the photographing light source is compensated for.

The photographing light source information and the white balance coefficients obtained when this white balance adjustment is performed are supplied to the conversion function determining unit 5. On the basis of the photographing light source information and the white balance coefficients ($K_{M_a}, K_{G_r}, K_{Y_e}, K_{C_y}$) supplied from the WB adjusting unit 2, the function converter 5b of the conversion function determining unit 5 alters the reference conversion function f_{D65} and obtains the conversion function f corresponding to the white balance coefficients ($K_{M_a}, K_{G_r}, K_{Y_e}, K_{C_y}$). Note that the procedure of this alteration is previously described.

For example, assume that the alteration procedure is given as follows:

$$\left. \begin{aligned} f_{R(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy')} &= f_{R, D65}(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy', K_{Ma}, K_{Gr}, K_{Ye}, K_{Cy}) \\ f_{G(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy')} &= f_{G, D65}(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy', K_{Ma}, K_{Gr}, K_{Ye}, K_{Cy}) \\ f_{B(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy')} &= f_{B, D65}(Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy', K_{Ma}, K_{Gr}, K_{Ye}, K_{Cy}) \end{aligned} \right\} \dots (4)$$

When arbitrary white balance coefficients ($K_{Ma}, K_{Gr}, K_{Ye}, K_{Cy}$) are supplied, the conversion function f is uniquely determined in accordance with the white balance coefficients.

The conversion function f obtained by the conversion function determining unit 5 in accordance with the photographing light source as described above is supplied to the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3. The conversion function f is used by the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 in the processing of converting the complementary color data (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') into the pure color data (R, G, B).
<Third Embodiment>

Fig. 14 is a schematic block diagram showing the overall configuration of a color image reproducing apparatus according to the third embodiment. Note that the same reference numerals as in the color image

reproducing apparatus shown in Fig. 13 denote parts having the same functions in Fig. 14, and a detailed description thereof will be omitted.

5 The color image reproducing apparatus of this third embodiment primarily has its characteristic features in the configurations and processes of a WB adjusting unit 2, a complementary color-pure color converting unit 3, a complementary color-pure color conversion function selecting unit (to be referred to as a "conversion
10 function selecting unit" hereinafter) 6, and a complementary color-pure color conversion function storage unit (to be referred to as a "conversion function storage unit" hereinafter) 7.

That is, in the color image reproducing apparatus
15 of this embodiment, conversion functions f used in the complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 to convert complementary color data (Ma', Gr', Ye', Cy') into pure color data (R, G, B) are previously obtained for several photographing light sources. The apparatus
20 comprises the conversion function storage unit 7 for storing and holding these conversion functions f and the conversion function selecting unit 6 for selecting one of the conversion functions f stored in the conversion

embodiment. That is, it is only necessary to select an appropriate conversion function f from the conversion function storage 7. Consequently, the processing can be performed at a higher speed than in the second

5 embodiment.

<Fourth Embodiment>

The fourth embodiment of the present invention will be described below. Fig. 15 is a block diagram showing an outline of the overall configuration of a color image reproducing apparatus according to the fourth embodiment. In the second and third embodiments described above, photographing light source information is obtained from image sensing data from the image sensing unit 1. However, in this fourth embodiment, the photographing light source information is directly obtained from a light source used in photography.

That is, as illustrated in Fig. 15, the color image reproducing apparatus of this embodiment comprises a photographing light source detecting unit 9 and a WB coefficient determining unit 10. In this configuration, the photographing light source detecting unit 9 detects photographing light source information with respect to image sensing data output from an image sensing unit 1.

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The WB coefficient determining unit 10 determines a white balance coefficient on the basis of the detected photographing light source information. The WB coefficient determining unit 10 supplies the white balance coefficient thus determined to a WB adjusting unit 2 and a complementary color-pure color conversion function determining selecting unit (to be referred to as a "conversion function determining selecting unit" hereinafter) 8.

On the basis of the supplied white balance coefficient, the WB adjusting unit 2 adjusts the white balance, and the conversion function determining selecting unit 8 calculates or selects a conversion function f corresponding to the photographing light source. This processing of calculating the conversion function f is performed in the same manner as in the second embodiment. The processing of selecting the conversion function f is performed in the same way as in the third embodiment.

The conversion function f thus calculated or selected by the conversion function determining selecting unit 8 is supplied to a

complementary color-pure color converting unit 3 where the function is used in complementary color-pure color conversion.

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In addition to the configuration shown in Fig. 15 in which both the photographing light source detecting unit 9 and the image sensing unit 1 are juxtaposed in the apparatus and the photographing light source is constantly detected, there can be a configuration where the image sensing unit 1 is separately arranged and supplies image sensing data to the apparatus by some means. In this case, if information of the photographing light source is added to the image sensing data, the photographing light source detecting unit 9 detects photographing light source information from the additional data.

The rest of the configuration and operation of the image reproducing apparatus according to the fourth embodiment shown in Fig. 15 is almost the same as the configurations and operations of the second and third embodiments described above, and so a detailed description thereof will be omitted.

In the second to fourth embodiments as described above, a complementary color-pure color conversion

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function as one of a plurality of image reproduction parameters constituting an image reproduction parameter group is calculated or selected on the basis of a white balance coefficient as another image reproduction
5 parameter. Therefore, the white balance and the complementary color pure color conversion function associated with the white balance can be efficiently and accurately set without producing any contradiction between them. Consequently, images can be properly
10 reproduced in accordance with the photographing light source.

The principal object of these embodiment is to calculate or select a certain image reproduction parameter from another relevant image reproduction
15 parameter, thereby accurately reproducing images. Examples of image reproduction parameters constituting an image reproduction parameter group are a color temperature, a white balance coefficient, a color component gain, white point information, black point
20 information, a gamma coefficient, a gradation characteristic, a gradation conversion curve, a gradation conversion lookup table, a knee point, a dynamic range, a color gamut, light source information,

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a color coordinate conversion matrix coefficient, a spatial frequency characteristic, a black (gray) balance coefficient, an S/N ratio, an auto-correlation coefficient, a Wiener spectrum, an intensity (density) distribution, and a luminance distribution, and parameters obtained directly or indirectly from these information.

In the second to fourth embodiments as described above, at least one of a plurality of different image reproduction parameters used in the conversion from an image sensing signal to an image signal is obtained from at least another image reproduction parameter. Accordingly, it is possible to avoid the inconveniences, when these image reproduction parameters are individually determined, that a contradiction occurs between correlated image reproduction parameters and parameters are determined inefficiently. Consequently, image sensing signals can be converted into image signals by using an image reproduction parameter group consisting of more accurate image reproduction parameters corresponding to the condition of the photographing light source. This makes accurate and desired image reproduction feasible.

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sensing data to be extracted by the image sensing data extracting unit 122.

An image data input unit 125 inputs data that the image data in the indicated position finally takes. An
5 image reproduction parameter determining unit 123 determines an image reproduction parameter by using the input image data from the image data input unit 125 and the image sensing data extracted by the image sensing data extracting unit 122. A color balance adjusting unit
10 126 adjusts the color balance of the image sensing data, when an image is reproduced, by using the image reproduction parameter determined by the image reproduction parameter determining unit 123.

A control unit 127 consists of, e.g., a CPU, a
15 program ROM 127a, a work RAM 127b, and an I/O device. The control unit 127 executes the color image reproduction processing by controlling the above components and components not shown in Fig. 16.

[Operation]

20 The operation of this embodiment will be described below. Fig. 17 is a flow chart showing the operation of the color image reproduction processor 120, and particularly the procedure of color balance adjustment.

normalized by the following equations:

$$\left. \begin{aligned} Kmg &= (Mg - Gr)/Gr \\ Kyc &= (Ye - Cy)/Cy \end{aligned} \right\} \dots (5)$$

With respect to the light source, Kmg and Kyc fall within a certain range in accordance with the above relations. Therefore, data (Ma,Gr,Ye,Cr) in this range are stored as data of the light source information and averaged (i.e., the total sum of each color data of image sensing data meeting the condition is divided by the total number of sampling cycles). In this way, the light source information can be accurately obtained.

The above method is performed singly, or in combination with another, as the white balance processing, and particularly as the method of extracting the light source information in the white balance processing.

If no image data is input in step S102, the flow advances to step S112. In step S112, the image sensing data extracting unit 122 extracts image sensing data corresponding to the indicated position and supplies the extracted image sensing data (to be referred to as "extracted data" hereinafter) to the image reproduction parameter determining unit 123. Upon receiving the

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using the image reproduction parameter thus determined. Accordingly, a reproduced image whose color balance is properly adjusted can be obtained with a simple operation.

- 5 In particular, this embodiment is not limited to the color balance adjustment (white balance adjustment) based on white; that is, the color balance can be adjusted by using any arbitrary color. Therefore, objects applicable to the color balance adjustment are
- 10 not limited, i.e., any arbitrary object can be selected.

[Determination of Image Reproduction Parameters]

One example of the method of automatically determining an image reproduction parameter will be described below.

- 15 Assume that image sensing data in a certain indicated position is obtained as (Mg,Gr,Cy,Ye) from the output of an image sensing device and image reproduction data (R,G,B) is obtained by performing the following conversion for the image sensing data (Mg,Gr,Cy,Ye).

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$$\begin{bmatrix} R \\ G \\ B \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & a_{14} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} & a_{24} \\ a_{31} & a_{32} & a_{33} & a_{34} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} k_1 \cdot Mg \\ k_2 \cdot Gr \\ k_3 \cdot Cy \\ k_4 \cdot Ye \end{bmatrix} \quad \dots (6)$$

In the above equation, k_1 , k_2 , k_3 , and k_4 are parameters for color balance adjustment, i.e., color balance adjustment gains in the data Mg , Gr , Cy , and Ye .

Commonly, the default values of all these parameters are

5 1, and a_{11} , a_{12} , ..., a_{34} are conversion matrix coefficients for converting (Mg, Gr, Cy, Ye) into (R, G, B) . These conversion matrix coefficients are normally determined on the basis of the spectral sensitivity characteristics of an image sensing device used in
10 photography or the characteristics of a colorimetric system used as an output image signal, and are generally fixed after being set.

Commonly, the color balance adjustment is done by using the parameters k_1 , k_2 , k_3 , and k_4 . For example,

15 assuming image reproduction data in a certain image position is (R', G', B') , the parameters k_1 , k_2 , k_3 , and k_4 are determined by the following equation such that image sensing data (Mg', Gr', Cy', Ye') is converted into

image reproduction data (R',G',B'). In the following equation, the parameter k1 is set beforehand as a constant, and an important factor in the color balance adjustment is the parameter ratio.

$$5 \quad \begin{bmatrix} k2 \\ k3 \\ k4 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a12 \cdot Gr' & a13 \cdot Cy' & a14 \cdot Ye' \\ a22 \cdot Gr' & a23 \cdot Cy' & a24 \cdot Ye' \\ a32 \cdot Gr' & a33 \cdot Cy' & a34 \cdot Ye' \end{pmatrix}^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} R' - a11 \cdot k1 \cdot Mg' \\ G' - a21 \cdot k1 \cdot Mg' \\ B' - a31 \cdot k1 \cdot Mg' \end{pmatrix} \quad \dots (7)$$

By the use of the above method, the image reproduction parameters k1, k2, k3, and k4 can be determined by using the image sensing data (Mg',Gr',Cy',Ye') in a certain indicated position and the designated data (R',G',B').

Modifications of the Fifth Embodiment

In the above embodiment, the image position indicating unit 124 can be so designed that an operator inputs numerical values (coordinates) by using a keyboard. Alternatively, dummy reproduced image data is obtained by performing image reproduction processing (e.g., white balance processing) using a default image reproduction parameter for the image sensing data held in the image sensing data holding unit 121, and displayed on, e.g., a monitor. In this case, an image position can be indicated by using a pointing device

such as a light pen, a mouse, or a touch panel and a pointing mechanism. This further facilitates the operation.

Furthermore, the value of color information (image data in an indicated position) in a particular region can be directly input from, e.g., a keyboard.

Alternatively, it is possible to display a color palette previously stored in the ROM 127a on a monitor and allow an operator to choose a desired color from the palette.

This further facilitates the operation. Also, a so-called color picker can be displayed on a monitor by the processing of the control unit 127. In this case, by using expressions representing the attributes of a color such as the hue, saturation, and lightness, it is possible to supply color information by using all or some of these attributes.

The color information can also be conceptually supplied by using words or symbols. This is effective when there is a color that the user wants to reproduce more beautifully or to emphasize, i.e., when image reproduction is performed by using an expression such as "color of sky", "color of leaf", "color of sea", or "color of skin".

that the invention is not limited to the specific
embodiments thereof except as defined in the appended
claims.

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